

# Mysteries of Mako

by LunnarChild

Category: H2O: Just Add Water

Language: English

Status: In-Progress

Published: 2013-01-13 03:08:29

Updated: 2013-02-19 03:16:45

Packaged: 2016-04-26 13:22:35

Rating: K+

Chapters: 2

Words: 12,536

Publisher: [www.fanfiction.net](http://www.fanfiction.net)

Summary: Mrs. Chatham once mentioned that the gift she had became a burden and had to give it up. The call of the sea for some without an anchor, is too great to resist... Future Fic

## 1. Chapter 1, Chance of a Life Time part 1

AN: This story is based on what I hyposthesised: Mrs. Chatham mentioned that the gift of being a mermaid becomes too much and she was forced to give it all up. So the gift can become a curse to where it disrupts the human lives of the girls. If I say anymore it would give away half of the plot line but you'd probably figure it out.

\* \* \*

><p>Mysteries of Makko<p>

Chapter 1,

Melanie McCartney always thought she had the rottenest luck. Or the universe loved messing with her. Her luck always seemed to turn sour the second things started looking up. She was almost an agonizing thirty minutes away from meeting up with Ava at Rikki's to celebrate the end of the summer and the beginning their freshmen year at high school.

The thought of the end of summer left a hollow feeling in her gut. For some reason Melanie thought that this summer would be different, some change or life altering event would happen leading up to some unseen future. Every day she felt a sort of passive waiting for a sign, a life altering declaration that would happen. So far for the past two and a half months it's been sadly ordinary. Which isn't realistic, this wasn't a movie where that some life changing event happens and a huge adventure follows in its wake. But it was a nice thought. It definitely left a bounce in her step. The waiting feeling turned into tense mas of anxiety which was starting to eat her from the inside out.

However though the freedom of summer ending, it meant the first steps to high school. A new chapter a page turns away in her life that Ava's been counting off the hours for since the second grade. Honestly it scared Melanie. She despite her curiosity the idea scared her; high school was ruthless full of vicious air headed girls that made bull sharks flee in terror and boys with snark comments about anything and a hundred other cruel and embarrassing unknown variables. Plus she had only two friends friend: Ava and Ronnie.

Ava had been her friend since the first day of the sixth grade. Melanie had a goal that day of making it through without being noticed, she hated attention. Quickly she scurried to the back of the class and opened her books. She had coincidently looked up at just the right time and locked gazes with the blond haired preteen that walked in with the masses. They've been friends ever since, each other's only friend. Melanie secretly feared that one day, perhaps in high school, that she would one day grow tired of her and move on leaving Melanie utterly alone. Though she knew that Ava would never do that but one fact remained: Melanie was her only friend by choice.

Melanie groaned letting her shoulders slump bringing her thoughts a full three-sixty back to her bad luck. It was almost ten past ten, Ava told her ten sharp. Ava hated being late with a fiery passion and she was totally going to skin her alive. Melanie could hear it now, \_"Today is the official last week end of summer and you were \_late\_? It's a crime against nature! You should be ashamed of yourself."

—

The dark haired girl grimaced; maybe she should pick up a chocolate bar as a peace offering. The way things were going she might as well pick up a whole box.

"Hey dad? How many more boxes?" the young girl asked with a smile on her face and a hand on her hip.

A mop of dull blond hair popped into view, her dad gave her a blank stare. "Oh? Oh! There should be one last box up at the car sweetheart. Oh and be careful its heavy."

Okay maybe not that long.

"'kay dad, I'll be back in a sec." Melanie turned and jogged at an easy pace up the docks and up the ramp. She could hear her dad's voice in the back of her mind lecturing her never to run on the docks.

Reaching her dad's embarrassing faded baby blue land rover, Melanie checked to see if anyone was looking. Melanie never understood why her dad loved this car so much. It was a clunker and was barely holding together with duct tape. He even named it Pluto, which was weird even for her dad. Melanie quickly snatched the last box with a huff. Her dad wasn't kidding about it being heavy.

While her arms took the strain, Melanie shuffled along down the ramp. Boats stationed around her bobbed in the water with the never ending soundtrack of the gentle waves lapping against their hauls. Seagulls cried overhead in clear blue skies and Melanie could faintly hear the gruff voices talking from somewhere. It was peaceful in a way, boring but peaceful. Not a place that Melanie would want to spend the rest

of her day but worth acknowledging.

Melanie shifted the load so that she could twist her wrist towards her flashing her waterproof watch. It was a thirteenth birthday present which was ironic because Melanie never took it in the water before. The face showed that if she hurried that she may make it to Rikki's by 10:30 or 10:40. Picking up her pace she navigated her way back to her father's boat the Cleopatra. It was then when fate struck.

There was a splash off to Melanie's left, not loud enough to concern her but enough to catch her attention. Then there was that feeling of falling when your heart stops as your stomach ascends into your throat. The heavy cardboard box disappeared from her hands and reappeared crashing on to the path of the docks spilling its contents. Melanie's heart was pounding, her head racing and her ears were buzzing. A passing pedestrian jumped back, stumbling as he landed and cried out. The frantic girl mumble an apology which may have sound as incoherent sting of wordless sounds, all she could think, pray, "please don't be broken, please don't be broken, please, please, \_please\_!"

Melanie scrambled to put back her father's instruments, scanning each one over for any noticeable damage. When her hand grazed over something warm and soft did she realize that she wasn't alone. Frozen like a deer caught in head lights she trailed the hand up and arm and finally a face.

Crouched next to her was the most handsome boy on the gold coast, Josh Gilberts. He had dark brown locks that obscured his deep blue eyes that reflected the sea. His clear skin was exposed by a grey t-shirt revealing lean muscles and wore teal blue and white swim shorts and black flip-flops. It was his casual beach day wear; Melanie had seen him wear it plenty of times at the shore over the last few summers she had been there. He brushed away his bangs with the back of his hand and flashed her his signature smile, Melanie suddenly felt light headed. In attempts to stable herself she involuntary gripped his hand that hadn't moved since she realized who she bumped into.

Her ears felt hot and familiar warmth creeping up her neck. At any dreaded moment Melanie's light tan face was going to darken into a deep ruby red. Right now, Melanie wanted to excuse herself so she could find a nice deep ditch to crawl in and die. That is if she could speak.

"I'm sorry again." The hair haired boy smiled causing Melanie's heart to stop.

"W-what?" someone should just shoot her now. It would be a lot more dignified than dying from embarrassment. "Um, sorry what?"

His vibrant smile faltered a bit as it was overshadowed by a concerned look on his face, "maybe I bumped into you harder than I thought."

"No, no I'm fine, really." She assured him as he helped her up. Her knee throbbed dully probably skinned but Melanie didn't want to say anything.

"Well as I was saying, I'm sorry I should've been paying attention. I guess that's what you get when you horse-around on the docks huh?" He gave her a genuine look of regret. "Are you sure."

"Uh ha," Melanie nodded vigorously smiling like an idiot. "Ya, it's not me I should be worried aboutâ€"!" Melanie's hazel eyes widen into saucers, "My dad's stuff! If anything is damaged he is going to \_kill\_ me then gut me like a fish."

"That's only if right?" Josh then got back to his knees and started to carefully place the instruments in the box. "Is this all of them?"

Melanie shrugged, "I-I, um, maybe? I'm not sure." She looked back at the glistening water, "I don't know whether any of it fell in the water."

Josh glanced at the water and then at Melanie. He then kicked off his flip-flops and took off his shirt and handed it to Melanie saying: "I'll be back in a sec."

"W-wait? What are you doing?" she called out but it was too late. He disappeared under the surf in a splash spraying Melanie with salt water. She stood in shock, her hair somewhat dripping and her T-shirt uncomfortably wet, Melanie cried out his name. She could make out a dark figure in the water. He did not just do that. He did not just do that for her. She was a total and complete stranger to him, Melanie saw him at the beach, in school, and even at Rikki's. But Melanie was pretty sure that he never saw her. She typically had that effect on people, always a face in a crowd. And even if he did Melanie wasn't worth the memory space, she was just a plain-Jane girl trying her best to get through the day.

When Josh came back to the surface sputtering she let out a sigh of relief and crouched so they were more or less eye level. He pulled himself on the dock with one arm but didn't make any further attempts to climb back on. In one hand was a black rod a foot in length with a small black box sitting on the top. Her father's equipment.

"I think I saw two or three more down here," Josh handed her the underwater camera, her hand brushed against his shocking her in the process. At the sight of Melanie jerking her hand back he smiled sheepishly, "Sorry."

Then he was gone again, once more looking for the missing instruments. Melanie gripped her heart in attempt to calm her heart down. Josh was being a nice guy, nothing more, she tried to reason. Shaking her head she distracted herself by putting the black rods back in the box but that only lasted for a second. Ava wasn't going to believe her.

There a wooden clunking sound, Melanie turned around to see Josh set three of her father's tools before hauling himself up onto the dock. Ignoring the muscles that flexed Melanie scurried to her feet to help him. He thanked her under his breath. His legs dangled over the side, water drizzled down the curve of his lean muscles. Josh made a valid attempt running a hand through his damp and now black hair, pushing it away from his face but flopped back in his face. As usual he looked stunning.

Blood pounding in her ears Melanie barked, "Sorry!" making him jump then chuckle. "I-I mean, sorry you got wet and all."

"Don't worry about it and by the looks of it I got you to." Josh smiled, his eyes sparkling and Melanie felt her knee getting week.

They lapsed into an impregnated awkward silence. Melanie nervously played with her hand not knowing whether she should leave or not. Josh didn't seem to care as he just sat there staring at the water with a smile like remembering a found memory. Melanie glanced at Josh then at her feet then back at Josh. Nervous butterflies exploded in her stomach and found she lost the ability to speak. Again. Now she knew that there was some higher power that just loved to mess with her life. She was a foot away from the crush of her life and she could not find anything to say while standing there like a moron. Melanie felt her legs tense as she fought the urge to flee.

"You look familiar," Josh's voice startled her. Her head snapped towards his face which had a friendly smile. "You went to my school right?"

Melanie nodded, "Ya, that's right."

"Weren't you in choir or something?"

Melanie stared at him gapping, "Y-you know? I mean, you know?"

"Well I think I saw you once, you were on the top row off to the right of the stage."

"Ya," Melanie confirmed her heart fluttering. He knew her.

"Melanie right?" she nodded, "I'm Josh."

"I know. I mean, well, um, I-I know." Melanie mentally smacked herself. Just shut up already and get out of there, she scolded herself. "I should go. My dad's expecting me," she told him before briskly half walking and half running back to the safety of her father's boat.

"Then you should take that box that's been giving you so much grief."

"Right," she sighed reluctantly turning around to face him again and make an even bigger fool of herself. "Thanks," then added, "I'll see you around."

Which was true. Melanie would see him but she'd make sure that he'd never see her again, even if that meant ducking into a dumpster to evade him. She spent enough time embarrassing herself in front of him for a life time. Some things were better off from a far.

Melanie wasn't even ten feet away from him when he called out, "Melanie-wait up!"

"Yes?" Why couldn't the universe leave her be? Turning with a big smile she watched him jog up the way with a steady easy pace. Why did it have to be him?

"I've got two questions. One can I get my shirt back?"

Josh chuckled at the light tan skinned girls face; she blinked rapidly mumbling a string of words that he didn't catch all of it but "sorry". Starring at Melanie, Josh wondered if she was always like this.

"Um, what was the second thing you wanted to ask me?" Melanie's voice cut through his thoughts.

"Oh right, I wanted to ask you if you were doing anything later."

Melanie froze her eyes huge and she whispered, "Me?"

"Ya, a friend of mine is throwing a party on his dad's boat later tonight." Josh rubbed his neck smiling sheepishly. "I wanted to invite you 'cause I feel a bit guilty about what happenedâ€¦"

The universe was finally making sense and the little flittering hope that was bubbling in her chest died. "No, it's okay. I've got plans with friends, anyways it was an accident. You don't have to do that."

"No I want you to come, bring your friends. More the merrier."

"I don't knowâ€¦" Melanie couldn't believe that she was actually thinking about it. "Where would we be going?"

"Just up and down the coast," Josh smile seemed brighter. "Six a' clock, the Sea Queen. Hope to see you there." Then he left leaving Melanie in a state of shock.

"No way!" Ava screamed excitedly making Ronnie cringe as she sipped her mango smoothie.

"Shhh! It's not that big of a deal." Melanie urged her friend as she stirred her own smoothie with the straw.

After the conversation between her and Josh occurred Melanie walked back to the Cleopatra in a daze that freaked her dad out. When he saw her he jumped out of the boat and grabbed the load she was carrying and asked if she was alright while checking whether she was okay or not. Robotically she replied still trying to process what happened. When she finally snapped out of it she convinced her dad that the sun was getting to her. Melanie knew that he didn't believe her a single bit but they had trust system. Her dad knew that when she was ready she would tell him. He smiled and turned his attention back to the floating laboratory picking up his discarded check list. But behind his smiling façade Melanie caught a glimpse of alarm that lingered in his blue eyes.

He then dug in his wallet and bulled out a couple bills, "Go have fun with your friends. You got your key on you right?"

"Always," she assured her father reluctantly took the money and left. Melanie glanced over her shoulder and saw her father's back turned towards her. His hand nervously placed on the Cleopatra with a look on his face that reminded Melanie of constipation. It was a look she knew well enough, he wore it as she grew up since childhood. A look

that escorted paranoid tendencies, he'd freak out over the smallest things like puddles and be really weird about once a month. Over the years it dissipated but seeing it on his face again made Melanie nervous.

"Yo, Mel you in there?" Ronnie asked one eye brow rose.

"What?" Ronnie laughed at Melanie's blank face while Ava huffed and rolled her eyes.

"I was saying, \_no big deal\_? Are you nuts? You were invited to the party of the summer by \_Josh Gilberts\_ and it's no big deal?" Ava done (for the moment) sat back in booth shaking her head. "There is something wrong with you."

"Weren't you paying attention to anything I said? I made a complete buffoon of myself in front of one of the most popular guys that we know." Melanie hid her face in her arms. "I'm such an idiot."

"You maybe an idiot, but Josh was the guy who asked out the idiot." Ronnie pointed out.

Ava glared at Ronnie who shrugged, "Ronnie's right, Josh asked you out. You should be ecstatic."

"Josh didn't ask me out," Melanie muttered into the table sounding like "Josh didn't ass ee ow." Hazel eyes peeked out behind her arm, "And even if he did, it's a pity date. I'd rather stay home."

"Well if you don't want him. I'll have him-ow!" Ronnie turned to Ava with a sour face, "What did I do?"

"Not helping," Ava growled through her teeth.

"It was a joke. I thought you had a little more faith in me?"

"Even if I did, it was certainly misplaced."

Melanie muttered weakly, "Guys"

"Wow, way to make the new kid feel real welcome."

"Welcome? I thought I was driving you away."

Ronnie leaned forward resting her elbows on the table top, "Then I guess you haven't been dropping enough hints."

"..guys"

Ava gripped the table till her hands were white, "and maybe you were just too dull to notice them."

"Guys!" two pairs of eyes landed on Melanie, "Enough. I'm fine really. All I want to do is spend the rest of the summer with you guys. Can you drop the subject now?"

There was a chorus of "okay" and "fine". Melanie let her head fall back into her arms trying to forget Josh's breath taking smile or those kind eyes. Melanie groaned. This was going to be harder than she thought.

Melanie closed her eyes and focused on the sounds around her. The café was buzzing. Dishware clinked, conversations hummed, radio music drifted from the stereos hidden in the corners of the room, shoes squeaked as bus-boys and waitresses commuted in-between tables delivering and taking orders. It would be a few more years before Melanie could get a job here or anywhere. Peering through the cracks of her arm she saw three moderately good looking boys hitting on a few pretty faces in the far corner. Melanie wondered if anyone would take interest in her like that. Her mind drifted back to Josh smiling up at her. No, he most certainly did not think of her like that.

"Soâ€¦" Ava piped searching for a new topic. "Are you going to the party?"

"Didn't Mel just say to drop the topic?"

"I was just curious; this might be what we've been waiting for."

"What do you mean?" Melanie looked up, her chin resting on her hands.

"Well, this is the chance of a life time. Any ways it'd be a good experience. Who knows this could change our lives."

"I thought you didn't care about the status quote," Ronnie asked.

"I don't," Ava shook her head. "Where did you come up with that?"

Ronnie rolled her murky brown eyes, "It doesn't take a genius to know that Josh hangs with the "\_in\_" crowd."

"That's not what I meant."

"Then you might want to be more specific oh-gorgeous-one."

"What's that supposed to mean?"

"So this hasn't anything to do with the fact the whole boat would be filled with pop-" Ronnie was interrupted by Melanie who silent the whole conversation, spoke up before another fight broke out, "Ava please continue."

Ava shot Ronnie a dirty look before continuing (Ronnie retaliated by sticking her tongue out at her), "As I was saying, that I just have this feeling about this party. I think it's a good one."

"â€¦maybe your right." The dark haired teenager considered.

"Oh come on!" Ronnie exclaimed scarring Melanie at the same time gaining the attention of surrounding customers who shot Ronnie a dirty look.

"Want to scream that any louder?" Ava asked sarcastically.

Ronnie ignored her, "I mean seriously, you're going to a party full of popular on the whim of a feeling?" Ronnie looked at Ava, "What are



you physic?"

"This could be good for you too Ronnie."

"Meaning?" the agitation clear in her voice as bells which clashed with her passive body language.

"Ronnie whether you want more friends or not, it's good to meet new people. You're new here so you're at a disadvantage."

"That's rich coming from the girl who only wants \_two\_ friends."

"Actually I only wanted one friend but two I can tolerate." Ava corrected. "So what do you say?"

## 2. Chapter 2, Chance of a Life Time part 2

**\*\*Stand in the Rain by Superchick\*\***

**\*\*I don't own H2O: Just Add Water, wish I did.\*\***

\* \* \*

><p>Mysteries of Makko<p>

## Chapter 2, The Chance of a Life Time Part 2

It was almost five and Ava and Ronnie were-so far-no shows. Melanie paced her room, nervously drying her hair with a towel. After she got home she took a shower. As the water ran down her face she could finally feel herself relax and enabling her to think.

Her dad would be out for the rest of the day and wouldn't be back till at least ten tonight. That meant she had five and something minutes of having the house to herself. Alone. Melanie thought of a few of her classmates that would kill to be in position. They saw this great freedom to do whatever they wanted but Melanie didn't really see it that way. Since she moved here Melanie practical had free reign, her dad would leave her for hours to go do his work. It wasn't because he was neglective it was because of his work. He was a marine biologist and so the most of the time he spent hours on a boat collecting data. It can be pretty dull at times so in attempts to spare Melanie of the boredom he encouraged her to stay home. This really wasn't so bad. Half the week he would practically live on his boat and the other he was a stay home dad. What the other students didn't understand was that alone was alone. No one to talk to or worry about. It's just you, yourself and an empty place called home.

Melanie wished she told her dad about the party when she had the chance. She couldn't call him because the mobile coverage was sketchy at best out there where he worked. It would make her feel better about it. Melanie was still undetermined if she wanted to go. It sounded like it could be fun butâ€¦Melanie couldn't explain it clearly but that waiting feeling had turned into anxiety. Melanie knew what Ava was talking about when she said she had a strong feeling about today-or rather tonight. It was still too early to tell if her feelings were positive or negative, all she knew was that

something was going to happen. And that set Melanie on edge.

To figure out her feelings on the topic, Melanie made a pro and con list in her head. Pro's, meet new people and expand her horizons, con's, that meant mingling with guys who were total jerks and girls who were air heads or guys and girls who weren't and pretend to be. Pro, it could be fun, con, it could be a total disaster. Pro, this could be the highlight of her summer despite its late arrival. Con, it could be the mistake of her life and totally worth avoiding. Josh was going to be thereâ€|.Melanie wasn't sure if that was a pro or con.

While it was the miracle of the century that he seemed interested by her it could also be prank of decade. Josh wasn't the manipulative type. He was the honest, calm, and level headed. Melanie had seen him stop a number of fights before they happened and he stood up for the victims of his so called friends. She could trust him however his friends was another story. But it wasn't Josh himself it was him. While she admired him and had a huge crush on him that's all it could be. Josh was so amazing and she was so ordinary. He was cool and normal while she was nerdy and weird. She could trust the minute she opened her mouth her foot would find its way inside. Josh Gilberts was totally out of her league. Melanie could guaranty that she was going to make a fool of herself in his presence one way or another. In all, being stuck in the same small crowded space with Josh was something to avoid at all costs.

Maybe she could talk Ava out of it, Melanie didn't have to worry about Ronnie she'd probably cheer and plop herself on the couch. It could work tell her she wasn't feeling well or something, Melanie knew that if she put her mind to it she could come up with some sort of excuse. If only, Ava had a gift for persuasion so she could turn any counter attack back at her opponent. Melanie had a better chance out swimming a dolphin. If Melanie was lucky and nobody mentioned the party till it was too late and the boat was gone, Ava may have forgotten all about the party.

By the time Melanie came to her conclusion the water was cold. Melanie turned off the water and got out. She pulled a pair of purple and pink stripped pajama bottoms and a navy blue tank top. With the towel she began to wring her hair out. Satisfied that it was dry enough, she sat on her bed and sighed.

It was so quite that the silence rang in her ears till it was almost deafening. No one would be home for hours and by the time her dad got home it would be well past midnight. Ava and Ronnie were running late. Or hopefully forgot. No longer able to stand the silence, Melanie struck her radio filling the room with sound. A song she never heard before came on.

"â€|\_stand in the rain. \_

\_Stand your ground. \_

\_Stand up when it's all crashing down. \_

\_You stand through the pain. \_

\_You won't drown and one day, what's lost can be found. \_

\_You stand in the rainâ€¦|"\_

It helped a bit but it started to cause anxiety to simmer in the pit of her stomach. When it ended Melanie stood up and started to pace nervously wringing out her hair. Thus bring us a full three-sixty. Melanie had a plan; act normal and pretend the party wasn't tonight and let the whole thing blow over. Simple and concise, just what the doctor ordered. Melanie repeated to herself, \_"Just act natural, just act natural, just act naturalâ€¦|"\_ Slowly her heart calmed down and the nervousness that was now boiling dissipated into nothingness. She imagined herself as the surface of a pond. Calm, clear, and still. Its surface like glassâ€¦Then the doorbell rang, shattering that glass surface into a million pieces.

"Coming!" she called as she raced down the stairs. There was an impatient knock at the door which Melanie replied again, "Be there in a sec!"

Melanie was about to unlock the door and meet her house guests but then grabbed her robe. If it wasn't her friends she wanted to look somewhat decent, it would be a lot less awkward. Satisfied with a smile Melanie opened the door that faded almost instantly. Ronnie looked torn between guilty and amused while Ava frowned. But for once they both had something in common; they were both dressed up.

"Okay if she gets go like that why couldn't I go in my hoodie?" Ronnie whined.

Ava ignored her and stepped in, "Why are you wearing that?"

"I changed my mind. I don't want to go," Melanie pulled at her robe.

"Melanie we all agreed to go togetherâ€¦|Is this about Josh?"

"No!" Ava's rose a brow, "No, I just don't feel comfortable about this. I didn't tell my dad about the party and if I'm gone when he gets backâ€¦|"

"So," Ronnie concluded, "it's about Joshâ€¦|"

"Melanie," Ava started looking her in the eye, "There are things in life that you're not going to be comfortable with and you can't avoid. In fact you can't avoid life period. This is just one of those things you have to deal with head first."

"But my dad trusts me. If he finds out I snuck out he'll never trust me again."

"Mel's right, you know." Ronnie added. "Wouldn't want to shatter that domestic trust."

"I'm not asking you to keep it a secret. You can tell him first thing in the morning. You can even tell him it was my idea-"

"Cause it kinda is," Ronnie bluntly pointed out.

"-but Melanie I don't want to see you live your life on the sidelines. I want you to experience things that life has to offer. If you don't go t'night then you're going to regret it for the rest of

your life." Melanie was silent letting the information sink in. "Didn't your dad tell you that the only things you should regret are the things you were too scared to do?"

Ronnie rested her wait on one foot while stroking an imaginary beard, "Soâ€|what you're saying is I should've decked Lydia when I had the chance the other day."

"Iâ€|guess, we have a lot of work to do then," Melanie sighed giving her friends a small smile.

Ava smiled triumphantly giving her friend a reassuring hug before dragging Melanie up the steps to her room. Ronnie shrugged her shoulders and had a look on her face that said \_whatever-you-need-I'm-here\_. Ronnie promptly followed the two girls after Ava called her name twice and whistled.

"I'm not a dog you know." Ronnie pointed out.

"Well it worked didn't it," Ava said finally acknowledging the other girl as she positioned Melanie on the edge of her bed. Her jewelry clinking as she moved around, "Now I need you to dry Melanie's hair while I pick out an outfit, 'kay?"

Ava didn't give Ronnie enough time to respond as she rushed over to Melanie's closet, scanning her wardrobe. Melanie saw the lost confused look on Ronnie's face and got the hairdryer herself. It was old and a bit clunky unlike the newer, sleeker models that were out today. Melanie looked at it reluctantly, it was her mother's because she didn't own one of her own. Melanie didn't see the point of it, natural drying was the same as air drying only with hot air and a waste of electricity. It was much quicker to get on with her day by letting her hair naturally dry. It especially helped during school mornings. Ronnie gave her a flashing look of pity before hitting the on switch. Melanie dealt with it. She grudgingly concluded it was probably a lot faster anyways.

Melanie glanced at Ava who was furiously digging through her closet then her drawers, every now and then pulling something out. There was a flash of white and grey that Ava pulled from the closet and something pink from her drawers. Suddenly that nervous feeling came back at full force. Melanie knew that Ava had impeccable taste in fashion and could bring out the best in people using only styles and colors that best expressed them. It wasn't so much as Ava as it was Melanie that was the problem. Ava would pick out something fantastic for Melanie to wear that would make half of the popular girls green in envy but that meant drawing attention to her. Something she would rather avoid under usual circumstances. But this wasn't a regular situation; this was a chance of a life time as Ava poetically pointed out. It was the last weekend of summer before the beginning of their freshmen year of high school. A monumental moment in any teenagers' life. Maybe it was time to pop her comfort bubble.

"Okay done," Ronnie stated happily unplugging the hairdryer and tossing it on the bed. "Now what, cause knowing you we're only scratching the surface here."

"Hmm?" Ava looked over her bare shoulders, "Well since we're on the clock can you braid her hair to the side?"

"What am I a hair dresser?" was Ronnie's only negative comment. "Mel, where's your hair brush?"

"On the table," Melanie ran a hand through her dark brown locks. It didn't feel any different but there felt like there was more of it.

"Remember to make it a loose braid but not \_too\_ loose okay?"

"Ya, ya, I get the picture," Ronnie waved Ava off with the brush then mumbled on her breath "At least I think I doâ€|"

Ronnie first combed through the dark haired girl locks, removing any tangles. It was a few long strokes that yanked through the knots that tore Melanie's hair out in large clumps, at least that's how it felt. Once that was done she hastily started to braid her friend's hair. Melanie was surprised at Ronnie's skill as her hands that were coarse, effortlessly wove her hair down the side of her face. She wasn't even aware Ronnie could braid, she didn't seem like the type so it never came to mind. Ronnie wasn't a physical contact person so she never braided either of the girls' hair when she slept over and her own blond hair was too short.

"Done." The two girls said simultaneously then shot playful (at least she hoped they were playful) glares at each other causing Melanie to laugh.

"Okay we'll be outside. I've laid out everything out on the bed." Ava instructed as she hurried Ronnie out the door that didn't put half the protest she would have.

Melanie quickly got dressed after she threw on a bra, "You can come in now."

"Whoa," was Ronnie's first word when she saw Melanie. "You are totally going to break some hearts."

"It looks great but some things missingâ€|" Ava tapped her finger on her lip and walked over to the top of Melanie's dresser where a faded white box sat. Opening it, she dug around. "Now it's complete," Ava approved as she made the last finishing touches.

When Melanie looked the mirror she stopped dead in her tracks.

Ronnie laughed, "Chill girl. It's you."

"Whoa," was Melanie's only reply. This broke all logic. She was pretty. Melanie never saw herself as beautiful but she never saw herself as ugly either. Just plain, the girl in front of her was anything but plain. Melanie gripped the dream catcher pendent that now hung around her neck with a smile. A stupidly happy smile.

"I know," Ronnie and Ava joined Melanie in the mirror.

"Soâ€|are we done looking at ourselves in the mirror can we go?" Ronnie checked the clock. "So does the party start at six or does the boat leave at six?"

"Umm, all I know is that Josh told me six why?"

"Nothing much, just for your information it's about fifteen minutes till six and it take about twenty minutes to get to the marina."

"What! Go, go!" Ava hustled both Melanie and Ronnie out the door. Ronnie climbed on her bike and started pedaling as fast as she could. Melanie and Ava were not too far behind her. Melanie couldn't believe she was doing this, she was shocked, but in a good way. Her blood was pumping and her heart was beating like a rabbit's but for once Melanie felt excited. A feeling similar to electricity, causing pins and needles in her toes and fingers. Even though they were on a schedule that they were way behind on, Melanie took in the sights.

The sun closing distance on the horizon, the sky was starting to turn pink and the azure water turned gold. The warm wind nipped at her face carrying traces of sea air leaving a salty tang on her lips. The girls' hair whipped in the wind as they sped down the road.

Ronnie fell back pedaling as fast as she could at a more leisurely speed next to Melanie. Ava was on a straight path for the marina on the side walk but Ronnie started swerving in huge half circles in the abandoned street. First Melanie thought Ronnie was going to crash but then she realized that Ronnie was doing it deliberately. Melanie looked down at her handle bars and at Ronnie. A huge tooth grin was plastered across her face, her eyes sparkling wildly with the fading light. Ronnie looked like she was having the time of her life.

Melanie turned her bicycle in a large half circle crossing behind Ronnie and coming up on her right. Ronnie turned her head giving a playful half smirk with a mischief glint in her eyes. Before Melanie could grasp what Ronnie was going to do, Ronnie veered to the left lazily then twisted her handle bars to the right coming straight at Melanie on a collision course. Melanie slowed down sharply turning to the left while Ronnie. Melanie's bike wobbled unstable and for a moment Melanie thought she was going to crash. It was then Melanie realized in the excitement none of them were wearing helmets. Ronnie laughed when Melanie got her bike under control again and charged at her. Melanie veered to the right in a sharp turn. Ronnie turned around effortlessly before charging at her again. This happened a few more times when Melanie finally caught on to what Ronnie was doing. The two evened out, swerving out in a half circle then intersected each other changing sides making a complete circle.

So caught up in the moment Melanie hollowed in excitement, pumping her fist, "Ya!" Her bike started to wobble dangerously and Melanie clamped both hands on the handle bars looking embarrassed, her cheeks burning a vibrant red even in the closing darkness.

Ronnie broke out in an all-out laughing fit, "Rookies!"

Sobering Ronnie made her bike jump a few inches off the ground then balanced out the bike. Then Ronnie let go of both handle bars and raised both arms in the air as if she was on a roller coaster. She screamed at the top of her lungs. Feeling better Melanie laughed at her somewhat crazy friend. Ava shook her head at their immaturity and strained to hide the smile that threatened break across her face.

Ava finally gave in when a car came barreling down the road honking scarring Melanie to the edge of the road. Ronnie on the other hand cursed at the driver (who happened to be an old woman), her American accent thick. The old woman returned the outburst with the bird. From there on Ronnie didn't make any more attempts at doing tricks.

By the time the girls reached the marina it was three minutes to six. Ava jumped off her bike as she rushed it into a bush. Melanie tried to lock up her bike but Ava grabbed her by the arms and told her to leave it. On the docks Ava asked where to.

"The \_Sea Queen\_, Josh said six at the \_Sea Queen\_."

"We get it's the \_Sea Queen\_ but where is that exactly?" Ronnie asked in a rush glancing at boats.

"Uhâ€¦um wellâ€¦"

"Well!?"

"Wait, Melanie where did you first meet 'im?" Ava questioned trying to figure things out.

"It was, it was..." Melanie strained to remember. She was walking towards her father's boat that was branched off the main dock. That was C6; she was walking pastâ€¦"B8!"

"Okay everyone, keep your ears peeled."

As the girls raced off to dock B8 Ronnie asked: "Everyone? There's only us two besides you."

The tree girls ran down the docks, the \_Sea Queen\_ would be leaving any minute now. Ava's white flats slapped against the wooden floating walk way, her jewelry jingling similar to dull bells. Ronnie was probably the loudest, her boots slamming against the docks. Melanie took the lead; she knew the marina like the back of hand, any ways with the amount of time she spent here it could qualify as her own second home. Sometimes, just sometimes, it helped to have her dad as a marine biologist.

"I think," Ronnie gasped, "I think I hear music."

"There!" Ava pointed up a head. At the end of the dock was a white miniature yacht about three or four times bigger than the \_Cleopatra\_. All the lights were lit and shadowy figures of people mingled on the deck. There was one person on the dock untying the mooring line getting ready to set sail. The girls cried out "wait!"

â€¦

Josh looked up reluctantly, he was still mad at Brayden. He and Brayden go way back and they knew everything about each other but he could be so dense at times. They have been planning this party for years, since the sixth grade and his older sister were telling them about high school. Josh wanted to remember this day, the last day before he took that leap towards the future. Josh knew that this wasn't it for them and there was still a long ways to go but what

they did in high school was going to shadow them for the rest of their lives. He had worked out everything for so long. He and Brayden worked for the last few years doing the oddest jobs for a bit of cash. It took even longer to convince his dad to lend them the boat, alone, with friends. Then finally when everything was going perfect Brayden had to go and mess it up.

Brayden loved the spotlight and Josh didn't mind, he could have the whole stage but some times that boy did not know how to keep his mouth shut. Brayden had to go and blab at Rikki's about the whole thing. And for what, to impress a couple of cute girls that were a dime a dozen. They had originally planned for a few other people but this, this was insane. Those cute girls had friends who they talked to and friends that they talked to, the cycle goes on and on.

Now for the next few hours Josh was stuck with a crowd of people he could care less about. It was terrible. The only good thing seemed to come out of today was that girl, Melanie.

Josh knew he shouldn't have been so careless but he was having too excited getting the boat ready. Then he met her. Well crashed into her, if you wanted technical. She tripped as a result the box she was carrying went flying and ended up sprawled all over the dock. She muttered to herself, "please don't be broken, please don't be broken, please, please, please" Her voice was panicked. Immediately Josh started to apologize as he got down to help her but she ignored him. When her hand accidentally grazed his it was only then did she look up. She froze taking a brief breath. She hadn't noticed him.

God, he was an idiot. Realizing he was once again in the wrong he gave her a reassuring smile smacking him mentally. She wasn't like the girls he was used to; there was something peaceful about her, something different. Unlike most of the girls her unfortunately knew she wore her hair down, no style or elaborate curls, just natural with only a worn out black head band to pull back her dark brown tresses. Her skin was a light tan which looked natural. There were some girls that just looked yellow or orange from tanning; Josh didn't understand why Brayden found it attractive. She wore no makeup or even nail polish. She didn't wear any top of the line clothes but an old t-shirt and kaki's. It was refreshing. She looked familiar too.

He tried talking to her again and apologizing but she seemed really distracted. And nervous. Really, really, really nervous. It wasn't something Josh was used to. Josh had the reluctant pleasure to know a lot of girls a lot more confident that boarded on the edge of a restraining order. She kept glancing at her hands and in every other direction but his. Either she didn't socialize much or she did not like him either way it was hard to interact with her.

It was a miracle to get her talking about anything else but her dad's stuff and getting her to stop apologizing.

Then something weird happened, she looked up with a guilty look in her eyes and a coy smile on her face like it was all her fault. Which was totally not true, he was pretty sure that he ran into her (like a bulldozer). It was a marvel that she wasn't knocked off the pier. When she smiled, it made him smile which was (again) weird because he had seen loads of girls smile before. You couldn't walk ten paces



without seeing a girl smiling. Girls smiled when they bought something they liked or was flirting with a guy. Josh would know. But this was different, it was friendly. Not flirtatious. Not mean. Just shy and nice. He wondered what a real smile from her would look like, for her face to light up and her grinning ear to ear. Would her eyes sparkle? Or did they glimmer? He couldn't stop smiling, it was infectious.

Even thinking about her, Josh couldn't stop smiling. That happy thought vanished when Brayden sauntered up the pier with a goofy smile on his face like he won the million dollar lotto which in his case was pretty much all the same. Now for the next couple hours he was stuck on a boat with a million people he didn't know and didn't know him that wouldn't careless if he fell off the bow. Since the boat was full of testosterone strung teenage boys and air head hotties Josh didn't see how things could get worse. Everything was ready to go; now he could spend the next four hours that he could never get back of his life on a boat he like to personally avoid like the Titanic.

"Wait!" Josh's shoulders dropped like lead. He reluctantly got up; in the fading light he saw the silhouette of three figures, girls, running in a full sprint.

The first one came skidding to a halt, her curled blond hair was erratic and wide blue eyes. She was thin but not like the girls back on deck laughing in high pitched volumes, but fit. Like a swimmer with broad, strong shoulders, this made her small figure look even thinner. Her shoulders were bare as she wore a summer dress with a jean top and a soft green skirt. She wore heavy layers of jingling necklaces around her neck and large thin gold hoops in her ears. Her skin was pail in contrast to her red lips.

"I am so sorry we're late," she said in-between gasps. "We had wardrobe malfunction..."

The second figure once in view ducked behind her friend. Josh caught a glimpse of dark hair when the third member of their little trio crashed into her two other friends. The first girl whipped her head around her hair smacking promptly Josh in the face, "It would help if you watched where you're going, we wouldn't want to be shoved off the dock."

"Aren't you always nagging about us about exercise? I thought a little midnight swim might do us good." There was a roguish smile and an impish glint in her muddy brown eyes. Though Josh would never admit a loud, but she kind of unnerved him-just a bit-with the way the yellow lighting off the boat reflected in her eyes and her disheveled appearance. It almost made her look wild. This feistier girl wore a dark tank top under another black lace top. Suffocating under her red beany was a wild mess of short dirty blond hair streaked with a single stripe of coloring. She didn't wear any other jewelry than the piercings that she was wearing on her lip and lining her ears. Josh fidgeted under her emotionless gaze as she analyzed him.

"To be honest he doesn't look all that impressive up close," the scary looking girl said skeptically.

"Excuse me?" Josh asked his brows scrunching together till it looked

like he had one eye brow.

"Are you sure that he hasn't gone through puberty yet, he's got a squeaky voice."

Freaked and insulted Josh asked catechized, "Who are you?"

"Ronnie!" the first girl hissed at the other girl "Ronnie" before stepping forward with apologetic face of steel, "I'm sorry about myâ€|" she looked distastefully at Ronnie, "acquaintance. You can't blame her when she's been raised by wolves."

Ronnie shot a look at her "acquaintance" that made Josh's skin crawl, "You do realize that wolves have teeth and a nasty bite?"

"Wolves also have flees, I guess it's another thing in common." The curly haired blond girl turned back to Josh. "I'm really sorry we're late and for wasting your time."

There was an awkward pause. The girls waited forâ€|something. The first girl that ran up to Josh kept eye contact with an emotion Josh couldn't decipher but it creped him out. It was a gaze so intense that Josh had to look away four times in every direction but her. The girl Ronnie stood beside her with that same skeptical grin on her face with a hand on her hip. Another minute passed with nothing but the silence between them and the music thumping from the speakers.

"So you gonna let us up or do we 'ave to sign a release form or somethin?"

"Wha-whoa, whoa, whoa. Look the ships already full as it is and we were supposed to leave last week. I'm sure you guys are nice girls but I can't have you on the boat."

"Can't let us on the ship," the curly haired girl repeated. "You invited usâ€|"

"Invited youâ€|.I don't think so. I don't remember inviting any of you."

"You indirectly invited us." Ronnie clarified.

Josh sighed, "You must've heard from one of your friends or Brayden but-"

"Brayden? Brayden is here?" Ronnie dramatically mimicked barfing motions then turned on her friend, "That's it I'm out of here. This party isn't worth it."

"Ronnie!" The other girl nearly shouted. But then another voice spoke that wasn't hers. "Ava maybe we should just go. There's no point in making a fool of ourselves."

Ava stepped aside letting Josh see the girl he's been waiting forever to see: Melanie. His breath caught in his throat. This Melanie was very different as in completely the opposite of the Melanie he saw earlier. Instead of plain straight hair, her hair was complicatedly braided over her shoulder even though locks of it were falling apart. Replacing her t-shirt and kaki's was a sleeveless white blouse tucked

into a soft pink skirt with a washed out black jean jacket that looked like it had seen better days. The only thing that stayed the same was her convers and her eyes. Melanie looked beautiful. Not that she was ever ugly but it was all different. Melanie looked beautiful but she also reminded him of every other girl back on the boat.

"I-we," Ava stuttered, "You do realizeâ€|Everything I did to get you both hereâ€|.Your Dad always saidâ€|"

"Ava," Melanie's soft voice drifted seeming to sober her friend. "My Dad also said there are some things you have to let go. Come on, Ronnie will be half way up the pier by now."

"W-wait," Josh looked around he didn't even realize he spoke; he was still in shock about Melanie.

Ava and Melanie halfheartedly turned around; Melanie didn't even turn around fully. She just looked over her shoulder with a unreadable look on her face. Like this was something she expected. Josh felt like he'd been punched in the gut. He wondered how long she's had this happen.

"From my knowledge of boats, three more won't sink the ship."

A radiant smile bosomed across Ava's face and a successful glimmer in her blue eyes as her hard work paid off. Josh glanced at Melanie who was less expressive. She had something halfway to a smile and a frown but in the dim to little lighting he could see an appreciative look on her face. A cross between relief andâ€| and something else that Josh couldn't put his finger on.

"Josh!" someone called from above. "Time to set sail, so let's get going!"

"'kay be up in a sec!" Josh turned back to Ava and Melanie with a deluded smile. "After you ladies."

Ava gave Melanie a reassuring smile and pushed her friend towards the latter. Josh held out his hand to help her up. Melanie looked at his hand uncertainly hers reaching out hesitantly not sure if she could or wanted to. Ava gave Mel an encouraging push which made Melanie stumble up the latter, slamming her hand on the step. Melanie gratefully took Josh's hand and looked over her shoulder at her blond haired friend.

"You didn't forget something did you Ava?" Melanie asked with big hazel eyes, the picture of innocence. "Maybe someone?"

Ava sighed; a flicker disappointment crossed her face. "Right Ronnieâ€|"

"I'll get her you want if you're in a rush." The brunet offered.

"No!" Ava barked making both Josh and Melanie jump. "No, I mean. I mean do you know how long it took to get you here let alone convince you? No, you go one ahead if I'm not back in five minutes you can launch off. If you go to get Ronnie who can tell if you're gonna come back?"

Melanie looked like she was about to say something but Ava waved her off speaking over her. She spun on her heel and rushed down the pier.

When Ava disappeared around the bend Josh turned to the hazel eye girl who was still frozen on the steps. She had a small smile on her face. Josh felt the corners of his lips turn twitch as his own face turned into a grin. Melanie's smile grew more confident in return. Josh looked away but he could still feel her smile. His hand still gripped her in a tight embrace. Josh noticed how smooth and small her hands were in comparison. When he looked up Melanie was looking in the opposite direction, her face was dark in the dim light.

Melanie cleared her throat, "Um, I, ahâ€|w-wellâ€|can I, could I have my hand back?"

"Ya. Sure, most defiantly. It's your hand who am I to stop ya." Josh chuckled awkwardly dropping Melanie's hand like hot coals.

The moment was gone leaving an awkward gaping hole. Neither looked each other in the eye and didn't focus on each other longer than a second. It was the elephant in the room to say. They didn't speak so the only noise that filled the void was the loud music pounding from the boat that overwhelmed the waves that beat against the ships.

"I-I'm gonna go. I mean not go, go butâ€|w-what I mean is that I'm going up, I'm gonna go on board." Melanie gave a pained, more of an annoyed expression. "I'm gonna go."

"Ya, go ahead. I'm gonna-going to stay here. For you know. Ah, your friendsâ€|Ya, I'll be here."

Melanie shot Josh one last gauche smile before she clumsily dashed up the steps and integrated into the party. When Josh saw the last lock of dark hair disappear over the rail he let out a pent-up sigh he unintentionally held. He didn't even notice that he had temporarily stopped breathing. \_That girlâ€|. \_Josh thought, \_She's reallyâ€|Something about her\_.

Josh checked his watch after a minute, it was ten after six. He really needed to get going. Brayden was starting to notice that they hadn't left yet which wasn't good. Brayden was usually clueless and thick, if he started to notice something then something was up and the crowd was getting restless. He had already heard five complaints in the last thirty seconds and it hadn't been a full minute since the girl, Ava, left.

He vaguely wondered if they were coming or not. She still had two minutes left and counting. Ava and Ronnie. Ava, Ronnie and Melanie. What an odd group. Ronnie was soâ€|and Ava was veryâ€|and Melanie seemed likeâ€|. Were all girls this weird or was it just Josh's rotten luck. Either the girls he met were manipulative air heads or in this case plain strange. If he never saw it then he would have never guess them to be friends. They were all so different it seemed impossible, but here he was, seeing the impossible. Just how much stranger could this night get?

â€|

Of course Brayden would be here; he's practically glued to Josh's hip trailing him like a one man groupie. He was rude, obnoxious, and also the first person she had unfortunately met.

To anyone that ever knew Ronnie would always assume the only way she ever got out of the house would be after some huge fight between her and her parents. Then it at the climax she'd escape through the door with a dramatic slam. She never really cared enough to correct them.

The real story happened like this. After a week of sulking and vegging out on the couch like a beached whale, her father had enough. He blew up into one of his infamous lectures ranting on and on about accepting the facts and how she should learn how to step up to the plate and accept responsibility, blah, blah, blah. Finally Ronnie's dads kicked her out making her explore her new city. Or her new prison as she liked to refer.

It was all so alien to her. It was as if someone had abducted her (her parents) and dropped her on a different planet (which her parents basically did), in a distant solar system on farthest side of the universe where escape was a fantasy. The way people talked, the food, and the currency was so foreign and strange. Heck they even had a different measuring unit. Ronnie knew that the rest of the world used the metric system but it was the \_rest\_ of the world, up until now the rest of the worlds was a place far, far away. A story sad and happy like the fairytales she used to read in a happier time. That's what the rest of the world was a long story in a thick book. It was like she had traveled to a different planet that was a lot hotter and backwards. The only thing that was remotely familiar was the ocean. It was a different shore that belonged to a coast but it was still the same ocean.

When Ronnie still lived back in California, she'd spend hours walking up and down the same stretch of beach hoarding pebbles smoothed by the waves and broken shells that weren't special or unique would inevitably end up collecting dust pushed aside on any free surface of her room. The salty air was the same as it drifted on the warm breeze and the waves crashing on the shore was almost identical. If you ignored the fact that the drool-worthy guys talked with funny (but admittedly cute) Australian accents, you could pretend to be back in California. Surfers raced each other to catch wild waves that crashed into the surf throwing up white manes of foam.

It was easy to tell the natives from the tourists. Tourists stumbled in the hot sand up and down the beaches in hats that could be mistaken for saucers, clunky beach toys and white sunscreen smeared across their faces like war paint. Meanwhile native Australians walked across the beach grace and familiarity that the tourists lacked. It was a similar sight back home, tourists think California, palm trees and sun what they don't think is cold winds and frigid water. It was a bittersweet up-side to at least living on the coast. Now all she needed to get back to the states is to high-jack a boat and sail for a couple agonizing eight-thousand miles till she ran into the California beaches she called home. Or pretend every thing was just dandy.

It wasn't until she passed a familiar sight of a hot dog cart that she realized that one she was starving and two, she had no money. Her

day had gone from bad to worse, not only was she kicked out of her own house but she was kicked out hunger and penny-less. Ronnie glared at the cart cursing it delicious mouthwatering goodness.

Frustrated she kicked the ground scattering some sand into an innocent passing pedestrians shoes. That seemingly innocent pedestrian turned out to be Brayden White.

"Hey! Watch what you're doing."

"Huh? Oh sorry," the words rolled off her tongue out of habit not really meaning it.

"Sorry isn't going to cut it girlie-"

"Girlie!" Ronnie repeated, her eyes flashing. \_No one\_ called her girlie.

"-you ruined my property. I'm unfortunately going to ask for compensation."

"A little dust is hardly damage."

"Who knows though, I could foot problems and now you dumped a lot of sand into my shoe making it \_very \_hard for me to walk."

Ronnie glanced at the annoying boy's shoes, "I highly doubt that those are orthopedic."

"Ya, well they coasted all of money."

His converse looked ratty and had seen better days. "Ya, well, you might want to get a refund bud."

"Well I can't since you ruined them."

"Then you got ripped off."

"You still have to pay of equal value!"

"Sorry bud, dirt is worth more than those things. Have you thought about getting a new pair?"

"If you don't pay up, I'll press charges."

"Ha! That's the funniest thing I've heard all morning." Ronnie turned to leave seeing as she wasted enough of her life on this guy. "Thanks for the laugh."

"Hey! I'm still talking to you."

"And I'm done listening, thank you good bye."

Ronnie felt a strong hand wrap around her wrist. She whipped around trying to yank her hand out of his. The end result was nearly pulling her arm out of its socket. She narrowed her eyes and growled, "Let go."

"I have a feeling that you're not from around here, are ya?"

"And I have a feeling if you don't let go in the next ten seconds, you're gonna need a plastic surgeon to reconstruct that thing you call a face."

"Oh, someone has a little temper." He mocked taking a brave (or a stupid) step forward.

"I'm warning you, bud let go." She seethed.

"Now, now, people around here have something called manners."

"Look if you want your stupid compensation, I haven't got a dime on me."

"Well, then I'll take your name and your mobile number."

"What for?" she asked suspiciously.

"I was thinking dinner and a movie."

"\_Wow\_, for your information my time, my name, and my number are worth more than a pair of kicks held together by duct tape."

"I haven't got anywhere else to be so I can stick around all day. Your name and your number and I'm gone."

Ronnie grinned her teeth together in agitation. If looks could kill this guy would be a pile of ash. She weighed her options. She could easily drop kick this idiot into the next content over but she promised her parents to try to use less violent ways to deal with problems. Plus she didn't want to go to jail. Or she could give him her number and deal with it. However that seemed as appealing as eating maggots. The last thing Ronnie wanted was to hear or see this guy again.

"You got a pen?"

"Huh?" the idiot looked dumbfound like he couldn't believe his nagging actually worked. "Ya, I mean no, I, ahâ€¦wait right here."

"Wow," she whispered to herself. Ronnie watched as he hounded strangers with begging motions, it was embarrassing. And she didn't even know the guy.

"Thanks for waiting. Here write it on my hand I couldn't get any paper," he smiled roguishly. A smile that could melt the heart and mind while enslaves any girl who looked upon it. However Ronnie Monroe wasn't any other girl.

She rolled her eyes and huffed to exaggerate her annoyance. "Names Brayden, yours?"

"Wasted on you, how 'bout Chinese?"

"Huh?" his dark brows scrunched up, his little brain trying to decipher what she was implying.

"Dinner, chow, food. You said you pay right?"

"Pay, I never said anything about paying."

"You want me to go to Dinner and a Movie and you're making me pay? You're not selling me here."

"You know what-"

"That you've changed your mind and never want to see me again, cause I'll happily comply."

He playfully glared at her, "No, I was saying I'll pay for the whole thing."

"Great." She said absent minded, "Done. Can I leave now?"

"Ya, ya," he didn't look like he was all there too. A goofy smile replaced his devilish one, he transformed into a cute boy into a little boy on Christmas day.

Ronnie turned away relief flooded into her expression. She managed to get away, escaping into the crowd before he'd notice that she never wrote her name down.

She felt disgusted with herself. Ronnie loved that she could take care of herself, it was a fact that she prided herself on. That she could stay calm and collected and not let anyone slip under her skin. Yet in a short three minutes that trait, that armor, was cracked by a teenage boy whose head was bigger than the contents they were standing on. The only good thing that came out of it was meeting Melanie and Ava.

After her unfortunate encounter with Brayden her armor was as strong as ever. If she was superman then he was her kryptonite and that was not a good thing. The last thing she wanted to show was weakness. If the girls ever found out she would never live it down. It was Brayden, he was smelly, egotistical and annoying and seemingly the only one who could get under her skin.

Storming up the docks Ronnie wondered how she could've possibly forgotten. Brayden stuck to Josh like his own shadow. The two were rarely ever seen without each other. That mystery was easily solved, the answer was Melanie.

For the record Ronnie liked Melanie, the girl was like a more innocent less aggressive, dark haired version of herself. For the most part. She was honest on any question you asked her, she was caring, and she was someone you could just talk to. Melanie was nothing like the "friends" she had back in the states. However Melanie still couldn't grasp on subtlety, especially on boys that she liked. Melanie could go on and on about Josh and that longing puppy dog look she got whenever she saw him wasn't helping. Okay maybe that description of Melanie was exaggerated a little bit but in the blunt truth she was like that. Ronnie had forgotten that like herself, Melanie didn't like Brayden so she never really (more like never) mentioned him.

"Ronnie!"

Great just great. Now she had to deal with Ava too? Did the universe take their vengeance out on people at random or just



her?

"What?"

Ava was never a person she would have considered as friend material. She was so...Ava. She was pretty and manipulative. She was someone that Ronnie would have assumed was in the in-crowd. Ava had big memorizing azure blue eyes and full lips. She had this long golden hair (which was natural-shocker) and this clear complexion with a zit free history. Ava also had this lithe body that girls their age were starving themselves for.

"We have to go back."

"I don't have to do anything."

"We aren't' here for\_ you\_. We're here for Melanie." She tried to remind me.

Like Ronnie could forget that. It was the only reason that she let Ava dress her up. Melanie could be as bold as her but she had this insecurity problem that let people walk all over her, bruising her confidence.

"Are you sure about that because you seem a little full of it today."

"Oh! Will you justâ€¦!" Ava threw her hands up, frustrated. It was probably as close as she was ever get when it came to cursing. "For once will you stop being a drama queen?"

"Me, drama? Take that back."

"Then prove me wrong and get on the boat."

Ronnie rolled her eyes, "You see I know when people are working an angle. And by the way your reverse phycology is a little weak."

"Okay you want to know my angle? I want Melanie to be happy."

"And you think shoving her on a boat with a bunch of strangers is going to improve that?" Ronnie shifted her weight to one foot.

"No! I mean, no. What I mean is that Melanie needs to socialize."

"No what you mean is that you want to play cupid."

"This is about Melanie and you promised her that you'd be there for her. And yet here you are."

"So?"

"So, you broke your promise. And you're okay with that?"

"Yes, noâ€¦" Ronnie sighed. Ava got her there. Ronnie hated people who couldn't keep their promises. That and Pomeranians, those things are just plain mean.

"Then what's wrong?"

"What makes you think that something's wrong?"

"The minute you heard Brayden's name youâ€¦wait a minute, do you like Brayden?"

"No!" Ronnie replied a little too soon making her voice crack. "No," she coughed uneasily as her voice cracked again, "I mean no, who would like that ingrain little weasels."

"Some find weasels cute."

"Cute? That's hilarious, they're like stretched out rats." Ronnie tried to laugh off.

Ava gave her a knowing look, one that saw right through her.

"Fine, it's not Brayden exactly but what he can do."

"What can he do?"

"He makes me look like fool and weak."

"He can't do that," Ava shook her head.

"Well he can."

"Brayden can't do that but I never said you can't."

"Excuse me?"

"Take Melanie for example. She's really shy and the last place on earth she'd rather be is on a boat with Josh. She's strong enough to get on the boat but she needs us."

"You know I think you underestimate someone like Melanie-wait where's Melanie?"

"On the boat why?"

"Are you an idiot? You left her on the boat alone with\_ them\_?"

Ava winced but most likely by the frequency she was shrieking at. The girl had a set of lungs all right. "What do you expect, if I sent Melanie there's a chance I'd never see you two again."

"With good reason, now come on we have to go back."

"Changed your mind have you?"

"For Melanie sake? That's a big fat yes, if she's stuck with you she'll be eaten alive."

The two blonds set off down the dock. In between breaths Ava commented, "And you say I underestimate Melanie."

"Oh I have complete faith in Melanie," Ava stared at Ronnie with a perplexed face. She felt herself smile, "It's the idiots on the boat \_with\_ her, I don't trust."

End  
file.